

with high seas and gales. As a spectator, one observes this from afar, but in this work, the reader becomes an onboard spectator struggling along with the seamen, sharing the exhilaration of a race well-run or the disappointment of a hard-fought loss. “These sailors were amateurs in the root sense of the word, men who competed for the sheer love of the thing itself, testing their mastery against that of their peers. That’s what echoes down through the years—the beauty and danger of a working life under sail, and the pride of the men who did it.” (9)

Canadian McLaren presents a thoughtful neutral narrative of the hard-fought cup race series and their qualifying rounds replete with some stately images along with wonderful action-packed photographs of the ships and their captains. His work, while quite an exciting read in places, is scholarly and includes a wide range of source material gleaned from the local archives of the two maritime cities and other places. Many books and articles have been published about these colourful contests over the years, but this scholarly and non-partisan work is among the best.

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Venner F. Milewski, Jr. *Fighting Ships of the US Navy 1883-2019: Volume 3-Cruisers and Command Ships*. Sandomierz, Poland: MMP Books, mmpbooks.com, 2022. 431 pp., illustrations, glossary, bibliography, index of ship names. UK £35.00, US \$52.99, hardback; ISBN 978-83-66549-02-9.

While every historian and lover of history is unique regarding the books they acquire, one thing is probably universal – we add to our collections for different reasons. Some books in my collection support ongoing research goals, others are by authors I have read over the years and find investing in their work to be extremely valuable and enjoyable. Some are there simply to support my own interests and fill in gaps in my knowledge and understanding. Finally, there are the books everyone owns, those containing the technical knowledge and details that are essential in the modern industrial age to understanding history. Sometimes not the most exciting texts, since they really don’t pull the reader into a compelling history of events, they are still extremely valuable for their technical content. This makes them handy references to support other works.

Milewski’s *Fighting Ships of the US Navy 1883-2019: Volume 3* fits perfectly into the last category. He provides the reader with a massive text delving into the details of cruiser design in the United States Navy and its evolution over the last 130-plus years. Divided into eleven categories of

cruiser, there are 84 chapters, each dealing with a specific class of ship. The text follows a straightforward process. Every class is described with details regarding the construction of each ship in the series, the key dates in the construction, and of course, an historical extract regarding the ships and their service. Technical details such as armament, armor, propulsion, etc. within the ship class are provided at the end of each chapter. The text is supported by lavish illustrations of the many ships discussed, including images of the ships under construction and in refit, serving as an excellent reference for the appearance of various ships. For example, the USS *Chicago* (CA-136) (139-141). Laid down on 28 July 1943 in Philadelphia, PA, the ship was eventually commissioned on 10 January 1945 and was sponsored by Mr. Edward J. Kelly. Decommissioned after the war on 6 June 1947, *Chicago* was refitted as a guided missile cruiser (CG-11) on 1 November 1958. With details of the Second World War-build provided, the ship is referenced again in the guided missile cruiser section after the refit.

The information regarding the details of ship construction is immensely valuable. The thumbnail sketches of the ship's history are useful for filling in gaps regarding procurement and production as well as providing background for the ship in question. Sadly, details regarding the operational history of the ships are not generally provided unless the ship was lost in combat. As such the text only provides a limited window into the production and specifications of the ships in question. This is unfortunate as the cruiser forces carried a huge amount of the weight of the war, especially in the Pacific, providing bigger gun support for carriers as well as supporting the battleship gun line when needed. Given the size of the text and the volume of material already covered, it is understandable why this was not included. The result would have been a multi-volume work just on cruisers. Nevertheless, it is a good starting point for fleshing out the history of the ships which the reader can then expand on as needed. Particularly interesting is the inclusion of illustrations regarding the camouflage patterns used by the fleet. This is not something that is often discussed and contributes a rather unique aspect of the history of the US Navy. The inclusion of command ships and unnamed ships that were originally called for but cancelled provides a sense of the scale of production planning for the wartime fleet.

My biggest criticism of the text is that it is basically a listing of ships. The technical information is useful certainly, and there is value to the illustrations and information provided. Unfortunately, it is lacking context and without an understanding of the ships' wartime service (whether in the Second World War or during the Cold War), the information is only of limited value to a naval historian. Viewed as a reference text rather than a history in the classic sense, however, it will directly serve authors writing in the field and as such would

be extremely useful. While interesting for the technical details Milewski provides, it lacks the history surrounding the ships or the decision-making on ship design that would appeal to the general reader. This is not a text that I would recommend to anyone solely interested in naval history.

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Lawrence Paterson. *Schnellboote: A Complete Operational History*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Seaforth Publishing, www.seaforthpublishing.com, 2022. (Originally published 2015.) xiv+338 pp., illustrations, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. US \$26.95, UK £14.99, paper; ISBN 978-1-39908-228-0. (E-book available.)

This paperback reprint revives author Lawrence Paterson's 2015 examination of the wartime operations carried out by the Schnellboote, or S-Boats, of the German Kriegsmarine during the Second World War. Paterson examines the service of S-Boats in the various theatres to which they were deployed chronologically, from their earliest inception through to the May 1945 surrender. Illustrated by Paterson's impressive personal collection of period images, the book covers both the administrative aspects of deployment and organization along with the "ground level" engagements between individual ship crews and their opponents. Two appendices offer the final dispositions of remaining S-Boats at the end of the war and a breakdown of units from 1935 to 1945, with a bibliography, endnotes, and an index to round out the work.

The text begins with a collection of maps showcasing the various operational theatres and key sites, as well as a foreword, glossary of common terms/abbreviations, and a guide to German naval ranks. Serving as a general introduction, the foreword explains the nature of S-Boats, compares their organization with other German naval units, and his formatting choices for the work as a whole. The actual introduction dives right into the origins of the S-Boats, from their First World War progenitors to the construction of S-1 through S-9. The next chapter shifts focus to the vessels' service in the Spanish Civil War and the period leading up to the invasion of Poland before truly hitting its stride with the 1940 invasion of Norway.

The main text consists of 15 chapters providing a detailed examination of S-Boat actions within a specified theatre and chronological time frame, followed by a final chapter covering the end phases of the war. The pre-1943 years receive the most coverage, since, like so many aspects of the German war effort, S-Boats had their heyday in the early war period. Their widespread use as the war progressed does make the overall timeline diverge between